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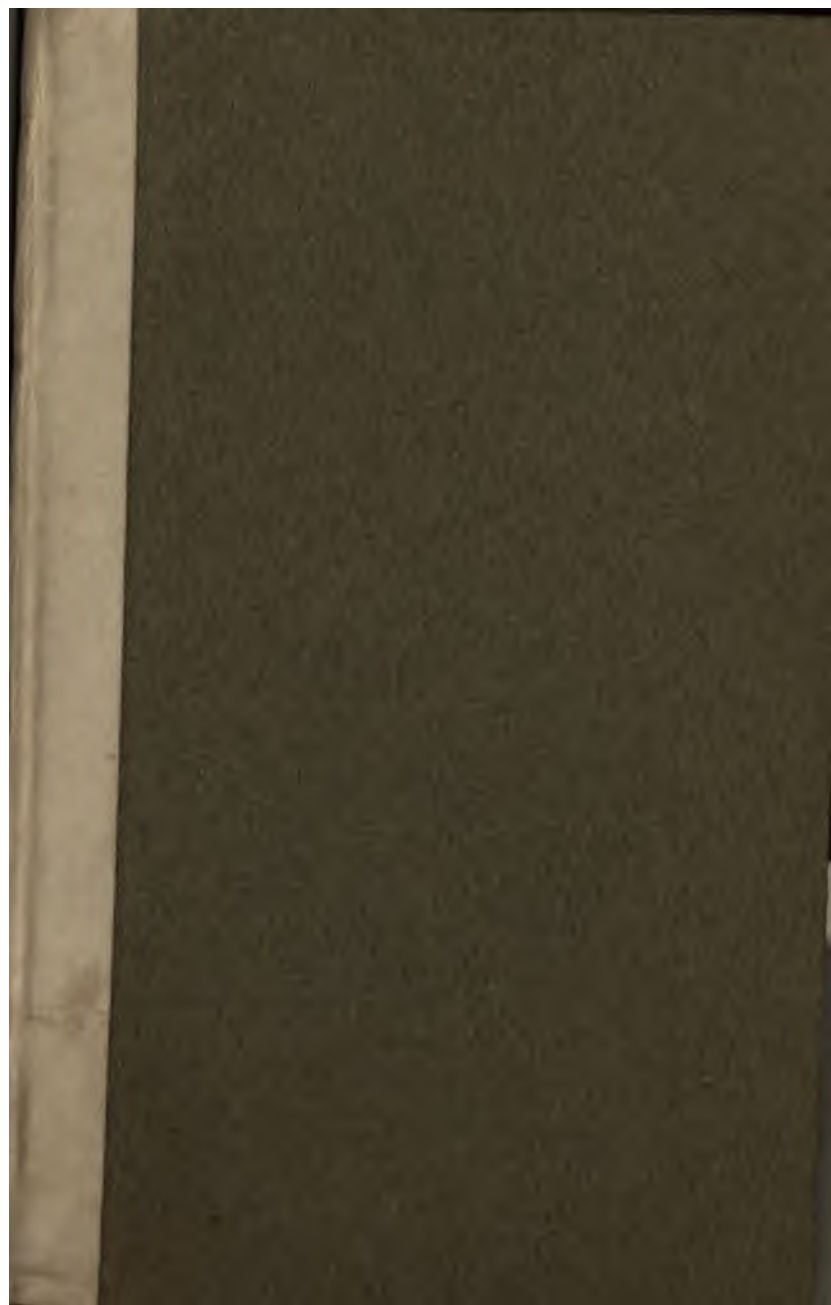
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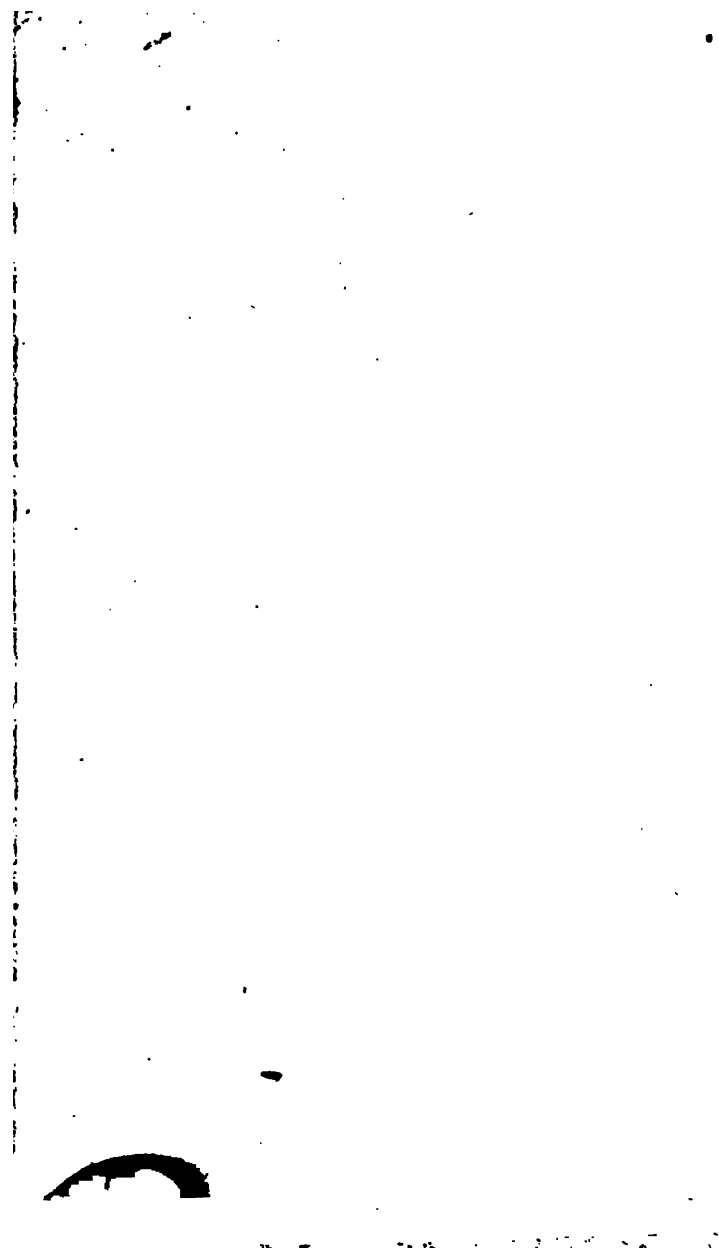


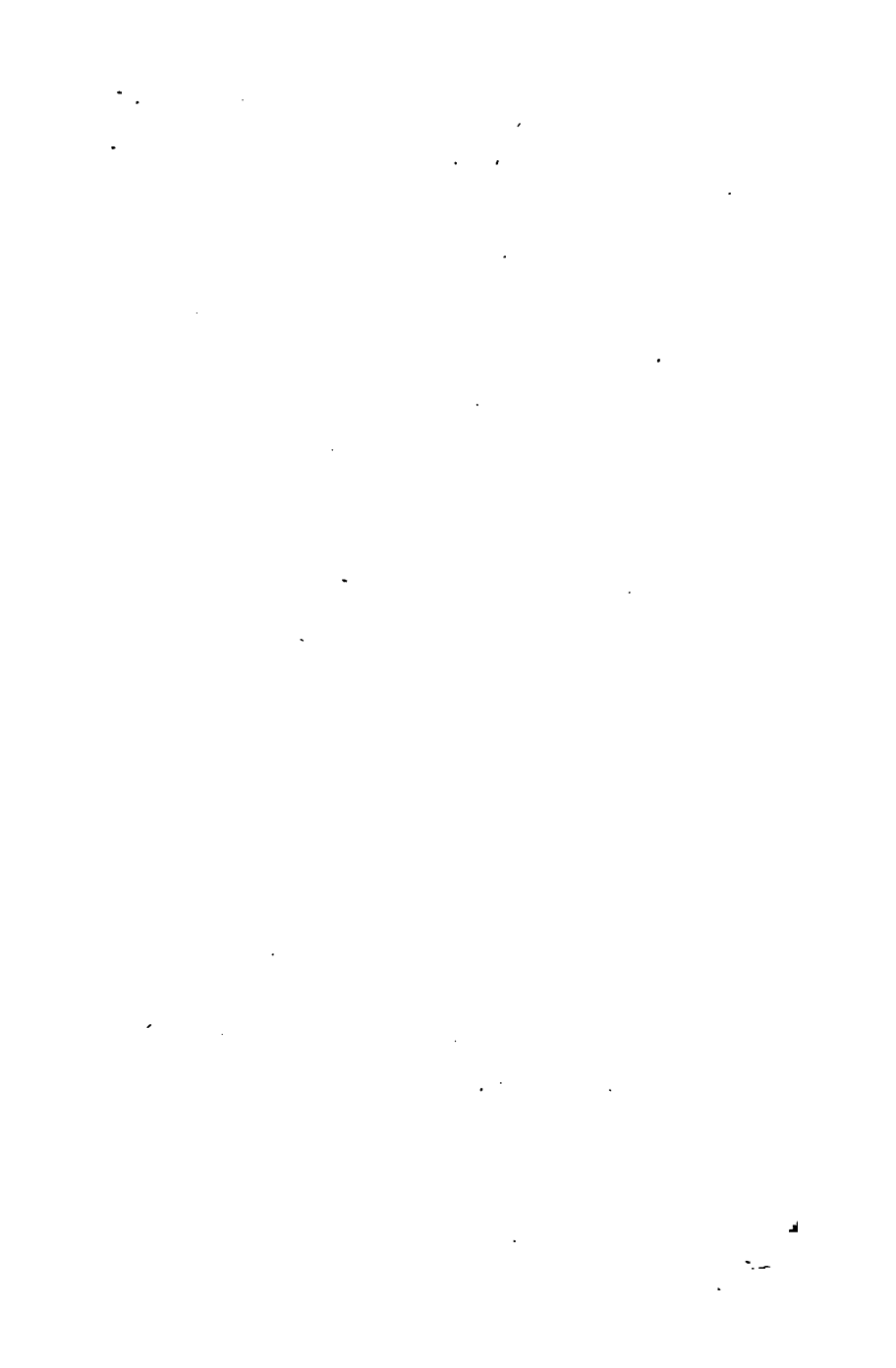
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THE
NURSERY GOVERNESS.

BY

ELIZABETH NAPIER;

Published after her Death by her Husband,

COLONEL CHARLES JAMES NAPIER, C.B.

“ Hear the instructions of thy father, and forsake not the
“ law of thy mother.” *Proverbs*, ch. i. v. 8.

LONDON :
T. AND W. BOONE, 29, NEW BOND STREET.

1834.




DEDICATION.

TO SUSAN AND EMILY NAPIER.

MY DEAR CHILDREN,

THE following little book was written expressly for you: it was written in sickness, and sufferings, which have terminated by death! It shall be my guide in educating you, while you are children; when you grow up, I hope it will be yours in educating yourselves; for be assured, that, unless we continue the cultivation of our minds by



our own efforts, all that we learn in youth passes away, and is lost.

The clearness, the simplicity, and the conciseness, with which the "*Nursery Governess*" is written, brings all the great principles of education, at once, under the eye; therefore, when I desire you to read it often, I lay upon you no unreasonable, or laborious task. This little treatise contains *principles*, and without principles, we can neither govern ourselves, nor others: the contents are, therefore, applicable to all situations of life, to the government of a kingdom, or to the government of a nursery. I will give you an example of what I mean by general principles. We are told in the following pages that presence of mind may be improved; and that the "best way to strengthen this useful and very essential quality is, on hearing of any sudden accident,

“ to ask yourself ‘ *what could I, or ought I to have done?* ’ ” The Emperor Napoleon said that a General, marching at the head of an army, should constantly ask himself, “ *If I were now to be attacked what should I do?* ” Here, then, we find a “ *principle:* ” the principle of preparing our minds by previous reflection for prompt decision, and immediate action, when the moment for action arrives, and we find this principle applied, in one instance to a *Governess*, and in the other to a *General*; and to both with equal propriety. I will give you another example—you are told in this book, that “ you should settle at once to do that which every one, I suppose, means to be done, &c.” Here is the *principle of decision* inculcated. Let us again listen to Napoleon. He says, that when he gave orders to his cavalry to charge, if they had their cloaks on, and that he saw them

stop, to take off these impediments to the free use of their swords, he countermanded his orders; “for,” said he, “when men lose the time for action, in making preparations, they seldom succeed; if they are in earnest they go to work at once.” The principle inculcated is, *do, at once, that which is to be done*, whether in the nursery, or in the field of battle, or any where else. To give you one or two more illustrations—you will find among the general principles in this book, that of, “*working with the means which you have under your hand.*” This is so intimately connected with, “*doing at once, whatever is to be done,*” that they may almost be called the same. The one is *to do*; the other, *how to do*. The last proves our resources of mind, and a person without resource is of little worth. I recollect an able chymist saying to me one day, “When I see people begin

to study chymistry without any apparatus but a broken wine-glass, a vial, and an old saucepan, I always feel assured that they will succeed; but when they begin by purchasing a 'portable laboratory,' and such gim-cracks, I give them up for fools." You will be told by grave, amiable, moderate folks, who love a gentle course between a *little right* and a *little wrong* for fear their neighbours should call them violent, that this speech was an exaggeration on the part of Mr. W———. Believe them not—it is a true picture.

Again—I heard that the commanding officer of a cavalry regiment at Romford complained that he "had nothing to do, because there was no open ground on which to exercise his regiment," as if there were no roads—no towns—no villages—no streams—no bridges in Essex! One would have thought that he

might, by instinct, have found out a goose-green to place his "grand guard" upon. Had this officer asked himself the simple questions "can I choose the ground where war is to be made? Ought I not to instruct my regiment how to perform their duties in a country like this about Romford?" he would have soon found more to do than a mind like his could accomplish.

Thus, in failing to use the means we *have*, we lose time, and the means we *wait for* perhaps never come. Here again you see a general principle applying to the chymist and the soldier—a lawyer would show you how it applies to *his* profession—a merchant to *his*—and so on.

I have selected these examples for the purpose of explaining to you what I mean by "*general principles*;" because they will, also, impress upon your minds two of the

most important of all general principles; namely, *to reflect when you have time for reflection*, and *to act when the time for action arrives*. These two principles belong to each other, and ought to be inseparable; but they are frequently separated, nevertheless; for some *reflect* but never *act*; these people are called **DAWDLES**—others are full of fuss and prompt decisions, without previous reflection, these are called—**FOOLS**.

You will meet with people who ridicule general principles—who will, in reading this essay, tell you “ Oh! all that is easy enough, every body knows that; every one can do that”—they are quite right; all things are easy when talent has taught them to us; and the more plain, and simple such matters are made to our view, by the labours of experienced, and clever, people, the more contempt fools express for that knowledge, which,

of themselves, they could not acquire. The best answer to such weak-minded people is contained in *Columbus's Egg*; to which we will leave them.

If, by attending to the contents of this book, you grow up to resemble her who wrote it, you will exceed the expectations, and fulfil the most sanguine hopes of your affectionate father,

CHARLES J. NAPIER.

*Oldfield Lodge,
3d September, 1833.*

P R E F A C E.

THIS little essay was not prepared for publication by the authoress : it may, therefore, contain faults which ought to have been corrected by me ; but the indulgent reader will feel, that the pressure of affliction paralyzes the spirit of criticism. The merits of this work are her's—the faults are mine ; yet I will venture upon the publication,

because it may be of use to those
who, like myself, are widowers, and
placed by fortune in the secondary class
of society.

THE
NURSERY GOVERNESS.

IN speaking of the qualifications of a nursery-governess, it is pre-supposed, that every young woman, who offers to undertake the charge, and instruction of children, has been taught, and is competent to teach, the rudiments of reading, writing, the first rules of arithmetic, correct spelling, and plain working, and that she possesses regular and orderly habits.

It is admitted that the earliest habits of children, are of great importance to the hap-

piness and the character of their future lives. —It is an allowed truth, that from habits, and imitation, principles are fixed; that custom will become almost a second nature; and there can be, I think, little doubt that the first instructors, placed with children, ought to be selected with less attention to accomplishments, than to temper, habits, and principles. Children are great observers, and imitators, especially girls, and they easily catch from their governess her habits, and manners, without the drudgery of constant lessons. Early rising, according to the season of the year, and to the climate, is a habit which approaches so closely to a duty, as to be often termed such. Great and regular attention to cleanliness, and modesty, in dressing, and undressing, is another habit to be early acquired; and the repeating seriously, but without any parade, the simple

offering of their young, and innocent hearts to their God, is a never-to-be-omitted *habit of duty*. The *form* of these first short prayers, the parents must appoint, for it is the parents *only* who have a right to direct in this point.

It is very necessary that all children should be accustomed, early, to help themselves in dressing, and undressing, at first being taught to put on their socks, stockings, or shoes; that they should learn to fold neatly their clothes, and put them in the proper places; that they leave no litter about their bed-room, and give as little trouble as possible to servants.

In insisting so much on what, by many people, may be termed trifling habits, I beg to be understood to have common sense enough to laugh at all trifles if too much insisted upon, nor would I be supposed to

attach undue importance to a pinafore being folded up, rather than left on the floor, or the not rising as the clock strikes the regular hour; I do not consider such things, in themselves, as great misdemeanors, and to be punished as though all the faults, and miseries of "the sluggard" were to be the consequence—no—my dwelling so much upon minor habits as I have done, and shall do in this little book, is because experience, and reflection have taught me, that early rising and regular habits, orderly ways, and helping oneself, in preference to employing another,—in fine, "doing things at the proper time, applying things to their proper use, and putting things in their proper places," leaves *time* for every thing needful, and makes every one feel satisfied with themselves; and that from habits being ingrafted, as one may say, from infancy, they "grow with

our growth and strengthen with our strength," and come as matters of course almost without thinking about; in general children cannot tell when, or how, they learned to read any more than they can tell when they first knew their mother. It is general, orderly, modest, candid, *habits* that I insist upon in every thing; from habit only, I believe, can *perseverance* be attained, and without that, a girl with talents, fine temper, and good principles, at twelve or thirteen years of age will scarcely know any thing well, not even common reading, writing, spelling, or working, if she has not been made to attend to *one* thing at a time, and to *finish well*, what she has once begun.

Thus it is, that occupations, learning, even play, have their best hours, and most suitable times. With respect to what those

best hours may be, I should say that early morning lessons make most impression, and it is good that the morning reading should turn upon some thing which the children may see in their walk, or, at least the conversation during the walk should be upon the subject they have just read or heard. I am not sure that it is good to encourage a multiplicity of questions ; little girls chatter for ever if encouraged, or suffered, and learn very little from the replies, even if they understand them ; with quick children it is well to say, “ I will tell you if you will try to remember ;” but great care is required to know the child’s disposition, for if you have a dull backward child to deal with, much encouragement is requisite, and great mildness ; for next to unfailing justice, mildness is essentially necessary ; I do not

always approve of telling, or even explaining to a child, *why* I do any thing differently by one child and another ; I prefer making it, if possible, *evident* to the children, or even explaining my reasons to a third person in the child's presence ; children should grow up to have implicit faith, and confidence in the justice, as well as the truth of their parents, and instructors, and all the talents, acquirements, and good manners possible, are little worth in a governess if she does not inspire the pupil with respect, and confidence, as well as affection for her. All children love, in a degree, those who take care of, and instruct them ; and this natural feeling is a powerful aid in the task of education ; but even this must be used with discretion : what is more silly than to hear a governess for ever repeating, " I wo'n't love

you if you do this, or do not do that." Love is not the thing of choice to do, or not to do ; the endearing qualities of a child, such as docility, candour, gentleness, ready obedience, and the long habit of dependence, and deference, produce affection in the governess ; whose unceasing solicitude, her capability, her mild and equal temper, and her care to teach, and improve, create, in the child, a blended feeling of respect, pleasure, and safety, which in time ripens into grateful affection, and it is most delightful to contemplate such love, from such causes ; happy indeed are those children who have such love, and happy is the governess who deserves it from her pupils, their affection will not be lost when she can, perhaps, teach them no more ; for the remembrance of a well performed duty will cheer days, and

years of her old age, and soothe her sorrows if such she may have to encounter.

Formerly in seeking out a governess we expected acquirements of a high class, such as music, drawing, languages, &c. and, where it was not required to be cautious about expense, it often occurred that the want of such accomplishments in the parents, or an undue importance set upon all accomplishments, led to very high salaries, and great consideration in the family, and thus well repaid the cost, the time, and the great application required for their attainment; such governesses as these are, or were, I may almost say, a distinct race, from the nursery governess of the present day: the former were generally, from possessing talents, or other causes, educated for the situation they sought; the present nursery gover-

nesses, generally, are the fruit of families thrown into distress, and embarrassment by great mercantile failures, by the death of fathers, in the army and navy during a long war, and by a general and increasing turn for expense, by ruinous habits of indulging in amusements, and dress—in short, by a thoughtlessness of the future provision for families. Many orphans, or helpless, unprotected, young women, try to get into a family as nursery governess, though totally unknowing any thing essential to the duties of one ; some are conscious of their incompetency, but try to improve, and it may happen that a few succeed by a wise conduct in self-teaching from the books provided for children—how very many we know to fail, yet they cling to the appearance, and name of governess, to save themselves from the far easier,

and far happier, life of a nursery or house maid, and from mixing with common servants.

It is then to the forlorn, untaught, and unhabituated to teach, nursery governess, with good common sense, and a sincere desire to improve, and make herself useful, and independent, that I address these simple maxims and hints.

In the first place, if she know not those things, which I have presupposed her to be acquainted with, let her (if she cannot spare money, or time to get taught by others) apply, at every vacant half-hour, to make herself mistress of them. Let her never forget what she *does* know; diligence and care will give satisfaction—let her ingraft into her own conduct the habits I insist upon for children; and let her guard against all bad ones that she may have imbibed—let her avoid too much solicitude about smart dress, too much

care about food—dress and eating are good as *necessary things*, but, in speaking of them, she must always bear in mind how acute are the little observers of all she says and does ; and that nobody expects children to be little philosophers ; one does not preach to them of its being very wrong, or very foolish to know or care about such things, it is from the *habits of their governess*, and the *example of their parents*, that they learn these matters.

It has been said that a man who plants a tree is a benefactor to his country ; and I may, without presumption, add, that a woman who implants a good habit in childhood is also a benefactress to it ; but let every woman reflect, and be quite sure, that she will become a bitter, though perhaps unintentional, enemy, if by example, and in opposition to precept, she encourages bad habits : few people are aware how inveterate a

thing habit is ; how hard to be got rid of even in trifles ; infancy is the season for planting good habits, and when children can learn little else, the very return, the repetition of the *same* things, at the same time, takes from them the idea of trouble in learning ; and do we not see how beautiful is order in all nature ? do not flowers, fruits, vegetables, come in regular succession and in their seasons ? We have high authority for saying “ there is a time for every thing,” and are we not taught by the same authority to “ train up a child in the way it should go and that when old it will not depart from it.”

To children it is wise to teach only what they can comprehend the *use* of. This accustoms them not only to think, but also to be, in a manner, rewarded for the labour of thinking, by the satisfaction of applying their

knowledge *to a purpose*—a habit of much utility, as it makes them consider what they read, and separate the useful, from the useless.

If a child be lazy, obstinate, or cross, the governess must be careful that this does not make *her* cross also ; she must, gently, show the child, who is in this temper, that if it does not finish its lessons, or work, it cannot be ready to walk, or dance, or play with its companions, and will be left to sit in a corner unnoticed. Thus the girl learns the *use* of being good tempered, and of self-control.

As to punishments they must be *rare*, and follow immediately on the fault, or a child will be sullen, or not know *why* it is punished, and consider itself as unkindly or unjustly treated, pitying itself, while it condemns the bad temper of the governess.

Was a child ever corrected of a fault when she saw ill-humour produced her punishment? Certainly *not*.

In contending so much for early good habits, I ought seriously to impress the necessity of discretion in the governess. She may have *rules* given to her for various duties and habits, but she is not to act like a machine when wound up. If, for example, a child have some little ailment which causes her to be restless, and feverish, and not sleep until morning, and then fall into a perspiration, would a woman of common sense rouse up this poor child at the sound of the clock, or bell for rising, and plunge it, with perhaps a cough or a hoarseness, into a tub of cold water? No; if she has a doubt, will she not rather apply to some experienced nurse, or old servant, for advice, if not to the parent, or mis-

stress of the family? And she must keep in her mind that there exists no rule without exceptions. I have known parents so completely enslaved by system, and rule in education, that every thing seemed to move by clock-work ; so that a child was stopped in the midst of reading, or when just conquering something at which she had been labouring to get by heart, when the appointed time passed, and she was called to some other study ; and to such a pitch was this plan carried, that the governess was obliged, while one sister was in bed, dangerously ill of a fever, to attend upon another, practising in the room underneath (*because* it was the music-room), a long lesson upon the piano-forte ! and it was the doctor, alone, who thought of daring to interrupt the routine of instruction. These are, I allow, extreme instances of folly ; but

every system, even the best, may do mischief when carried to excess. Use discretion, and prudence if you have them; if you have them not, try to acquire them by reading and reflection; children will need all you can attain of these qualifications. Presence of mind is another most useful, and even important thing to a person about children; many people say it is not to be taught or learned; I believe myself it may be strengthened and improved, for on ordinary occasions every one possesses it in some degree: For instance, if a child fall, any one but an idiot runs to pick it up, and chafes, and soothes the hurt, and never thinks of leaving the child sprawling and screaming while she reflects *how* it could happen to fall! After reflection may be good, if it lead to avoid the cause of future evil: in the poor child's fall, one *acts first*; in the case of the


feverish child, one *reflects first*; and these are both requisite.

The want of presence of mind, or, as the maids call it “being frightened out of one’s wits,” is a great misfortune, particularly to a person who has the charge of children, for they are for ever requiring it at your hands; often even by odd questions, and very often by some untoward accident, that demands all your senses to be on the stretch, and your firmness also. The best way, that I know, to strengthen this useful, and very essential quality, is, on hearing of any sudden accident or occurrence, to ask yourself, “*What could I, or what ought I to have done?*” To reflect, seriously, on the good you may do by keeping your senses ready for use, and what unhappiness, and regret, the wanting presence of mind to be useful, may entail; accustom yourself to assist if any accident happen,

to any body, even to the animals about the house, to every one, and to every thing that needs assistance—do not mind its not being amongst your regular duties, it is always kind, and useful, to be obliging, and ready; and the benefit it may be is unspeakable.


Among other good habits, constant exercise in the open air is excellent, invigorating the health and spirits, opening the mind, and leading it to contemplate the beauties of nature, and the power, and goodness of God! In a fine sunny day, children, when very young, can be led to enjoy and admire flowers, trees, fruits, animals, and, by degrees, to comprehend how great, how kind, and how mighty that Being must be, who not only made, but rules the universe; the sun, the stars, the moon, the seas, the mountains—worlds, in all their glory! Natural beauties, and a taste for them, is one of the earliest lessons that a child can be

taught, and can scarcely have too much of. The simple beauty of the spring flowers, harmonizes delightfully with the beauty and gladness of childhood, and to contemplate the joyous looks, eager and sparkling eyes, and the care in bringing in the first found snow-drop, is more gratifying to a parent than if it were a jewel of high price. When I see this, I foretell for the happy bounding Being, the content, and satisfaction it will always feel in simple pleasures. Here again the governess must notice, that if she has not the HABIT OF EARLY RISING, she will not have *time* for long walks, or rambles in the country, without encroaching on some useful lesson, or work; they are a little too late for luncheon, a very little too late for something else, have not their hands washed in time for dinner, and thus *they run all day after the half hour they lost, or loitered away, in the morning!*



I do not agree in the opinion of those who look with a sort of contempt upon teaching the use of plain work to girls, that are not required to earn their own bread. Why should not a little girl be taught that which may make her useful to herself and others? I strongly advise all those who look down upon, what they call, a trifling useless sort of drudgery for a lady, to be right certain that they give some more useful, and important occupation for *every* hour and minute of their pupil's time. It is absurd to advance that a girl is better employed in learning her lessons, than in doing that which a house-maid can do as well; will any one pretend that knowing how to work ever unfitted any one woman for higher attainments? will not a girl almost teach *herself* to sew, that she may work for her doll? I am inclined to believe that the contempt of

usefulness is an affectation of superiority, and an aim at singularity ; but I am told it is a fashionable system now-a-days, and many a ragged collar and wristband, worn by the fathers and brothers of families attest the opinion, and are such as the wife, and plain-working daughters of a gentleman's family would have, formerly, blushed to see worn. I do not mean to condemn others, and would not willingly offend any one, I only advise what a good nursery governess should be, and do, and know how to teach : I am not writing to the learned, but I venture to say that before we break through the customs of our great grandmothers, we ought to give the rising generation some better occupation for *all* their *spare* time, than that which the perfect, and various uses of the needle afforded formerly, or at least, let them know how to work well,




and readily, so that if their companion should read aloud, they may not be condemned to lose their time, and, if they do not like the book, bite their fingers for very weariness.*

A nursery governess should be able to repair, and even make, children's clothes, and teach her pupils to assist her: her manners at table, her behaviour at church, her sentiments when expressed, and her very looks ought *all* to be lessons, as well as her habits; and she can hardly avoid to improve herself daily, if she be careful and anxious to give only good example. Finally she should be mild, active, pious, decided, and *very gentle*. If, as it must sometimes be, that she cannot have all those perfections, she must strive to come as nearly as possible to this standard, and although she possess no one of the

* See note 2, p. 74.

usually sought accomplishments, I should pity the parents who would exchange her, (if possessed of the above character,) for all that scientific knowledge, and fine taste in music, &c. &c. might endow another with, if inferior in the above essential qualifications.

Before I speak of the actual lessons or method of teaching, I must again return to the good old custom of having girls (even if they are of high rank, and good fortune) taught to work : let me ask any one, if it be not an admitted point, that where a decided natural taste for any desirable attainment is evident, it is wise to cultivate that taste to the utmost ? And who will pretend that girls have not a natural taste for work, or at least an aptitude, a quickness in learning the use of a needle, beyond their readiness at any thing else ; but here perhaps my opponent will reply, “ all this may be true



and I admit it, but my chambermaid can teach this," or "it wants no teaching, girls learn it from their maids," and do you think then, that a child who is so quick, and so clever, will learn *only* one thing from a maid, who she sees knows more than herself; and who is set to teach her? But we will pass by this a little, and see *how* she will be taught: cannot one fancy one sees a young lady imitating the example, and manner of her working mistress, and sewing away with a thread as long as her arm, her work pinned to her knee, sitting bent double, perhaps, and chattering the whole time, or listening to some servant's secrets, not to be repeated on pain of hearing no more! Assuredly if it be acknowledged, however ungraciously, that a girl may as well know how to work, it must be better to have her *well* taught, and by persons who, not


having vulgar, sly, or bad habits, themselves, are not likely to teach them to their pupils.

I recollect some time ago seeing a fine-tempered clever girl on a visit for a week, without the ever ready dangling maid; and this poor helpless child could do nothing for herself. She lost her shoe-string, she had no idea how to sew on another; a little girl of three years old, in running, tore her frock, her cousin the visitor, though willing to help any one, knew not how; an old lady in the family, who could not see well, wanted something nicely sewed, but she was obliged to apply elsewhere; and, worse than all this, the family contributed to buy linen for some poor people, who could not afford time to make it up, even though a gift. The whole family, old and young, did a part, according to their age; all, but their visitor, were busy, happy, delighted; she, alone, felt how useless

she was for want of knowing that, which children, much younger than herself, and old people, did readily. She had good sense, and she begged to be taught to work, which was the first request she made to her mamma when she returned home. This little anecdote shall finish my long dissertation on the use of knowing how to work ; only remarking that it does *not interfere with*, much less *prevent* more serious, or agreeable studies ; neither does it, *of necessity*, cause or give a taste for gossip ; a girl takes this pitiful propensity, as well as over-curiousness, generally speaking from the people about her, and most of all from the maids, if she is ever left to their care ; and it is very evident that the more helpless she is, the more she must depend upon their assistance, and the more time she must, consequently, pass in their company.


The perfect knowledge of accounts, and writing a good hand, have, I believe, but few enemies, and these are less under a woman's superintendence, so I will only say with regard to accounts that they should be taught to a much greater extent than is generally the case at present.

Very early rising, and going to bed, for children, is quite necessary to health ; the exact time cannot, however, be fixed for the whole year, but, as nearly as may be, with the rising, and setting sun, is recommended ; and exercise before breakfast is generally good ; in summer particularly. The breakfast should be plentiful, and simple as possible, such as bread, and milk or milk and water ; no feeding except bread and water, between breakfast and dinner, which last should consist of one kind of meat, with vegetables and, sometimes, pudding. Their




supper the same as their breakfast; and if they have their meals with the family, they will hardly need teaching to do *this*, and not to do *that*, but if the family is composed of *epicures*, fond of high-seasoned dishes, soups, and great variety, particularly if they eat fruits, and sweetmeats of all sorts for dessert, I advise them to keep their children in the school-room, or not expect them to be temperate or healthy; neither have you a *right* to expect that *they* should resist, what *you* give way to every day before them.

I am a great advocate for the rule that the parent, *not* the child, is to choose its food, because experience may have taught the former discretion and judgement, but a constant repetition of "*this is not good for you,*" or "*will make you ill,*" when the child sees you eat it daily, without being ill, must in



time create some doubt in the most docile disposition. I am not going to endeavour to reform epicures, or gluttons: I only say to such, that if you value your child's health, spirits, and respect for your opinions, do not let them dine with you ; and their doing so is the more objectionable, because they must partake of your dessert, which is generally just before their bed-time: ripe fruit, or even dried, is wholesome, and good for children, if eaten with bread, at the *time of luncheon*, and *in moderation*.


I now pass to the lessons, and recommend the spelling to be the first, and the distinct sounds of the vowels to be constantly recurred to, and practised ; and also their different sounds when united to consonants. These two things should be well impressed upon the memory before the child begins to read. In this, as in all else, it is good to



teach *one thing well*, before you begin another. Of course I do not mean that a child may not learn to write figures at the same time it does letters. I do not recommend very large letters or figures, and I think making straight strokes is only good for a short time to give the command of the hand and fingers; some children will write as soon as read—some find it very difficult, and I have known a child ponder, with all its powers of imitation, to form a letter, or figure, from a clear copy before it, and not succeed, yet catch it readily from seeing the movement of the teacher's hand, as she formed it; and if a child thus fails in forming the letter, guiding her hand, even once, will succeed generally, but the model, and choosing the time when the child is quiet, are the chief things to depend upon, and due praise when done well; I say *due* praise,

for undue praise does more mischief than one is well aware of; as children are great observers, and good judges too, they will, frequently, turn from the person accustomed to praise them lavishly, to one who rarely does so, and be better pleased with the simple "yes, it is better done," than with the overmuch praise of the other.

There are a vast number of points to be corrected, and softened in children, which do not affect the heart or head, and are of no vital importance to their character, happiness, or respectability, and yet are very disagreeable if indulged, and, sometimes, even very inconvenient to themselves, and to others. And, surely, such things, though trifles, it is fair to save children the trouble of correcting when beyond childhood, and this is easily done by *early habit*! The proverb says "*ill weeds grow apace*:" so do ill habits; and (as



I have before said) it is hardly to be conceived how hard a thing it is to eradicate them. Some people exclaim without much reflection "it is no matter for a child, how it behaves, for when a girl grows up, she observes and corrects herself." This may happen to a clever girl who *does* observe, and who *does* take the trouble to correct herself—but why give her this trouble? It must be to save yourself, I presume, the most trifling, and common attention. There is, clearly, a medium to be found, between the prim miss who, affectedly, apes the manners of a woman, and the noisy, rude, child, who eats with its fingers, stuffs its mouth full, almost to choaking; will eat only of the things it fancies, talks, and crams at once, and greases every thing, and person, within its reach. I am aware that I am bordering upon a dangerous point in criticising or pretending to

1

limit, what nevertheless I must take leave to call the dangerous habit of *self-indulgence*, so commonly seen in those who delight in giving to infants gay dresses, sweets, and “*nice things*” and variety, or particular sorts of food; I suppose it may be natural that one should try to please those we love, *at whatever cost*; we know what we ourselves prefer, or did prefer, when young; we forget how those tastes grew, or were fostered; and we do not reflect that by teaching a child to care more for one dress than another, or by inviting it to choose what it fancies, at table, perhaps even what *part* of the meat, or by asking if it likes brown, or gravy, or meat much, or little, cooked, we *put into its head* a thing it never before cared for, and give it a want, and a desire the more; thus making it a fastidious, troublesome little epicure, where nature intended a contented and happy

child! I do not mean to contend that the indulgence I refer to must *always* be injurious to children's health, tastes, and habits, when grown up, but, assuredly, it is a great weakness, which, if it gives a few moments of fleeting pleasure, often entails disappointments and ill temper. I am sensible that my ideas on this subject are not likely to be followed up *generally*, for to act by them requires some trouble, requires great self denial, great command of temper, steadiness, and perseverance. I have been led to give them freely; however, because I have, often, seen little girls made ridiculous by such fancies being indulged, to the great annoyance of quiet moderate people; I have seen them pout, and turn sulky, at not being allowed to have the part of the meat they wanted, and even refuse to eat at all, and mamma, or governess, if they are rational folks, regret the task they

have given themselves of *unteaching* (if the word may be permitted) which is a far more difficult one than *teaching*. Should circumstances induce the necessity of sending them to school, how many mortifications surround them, which they might have been spared!

The bad manners that I have described, are generally acquired by eating in the nursery, when attended by careless maids, who indulge children's fancies to keep them quiet, and let them stuff themselves to get dinner over, that the maids may have more time for their own. Thus the children become accustomed to wait for nothing, and run off the instant they have swallowed as much as they can, and here I take my leave of these disagreeable children, and their too indulgent parents.

I have hitherto spoken of nursery governesses, and very young children, I will now

go a little beyond childhood, and add a few remarks which have, often, suggested themselves to my mind, when reflecting on the generally-received idea that a variety of *auxiliaries* are required for education in all its branches, but which, if a child has acquired early, the treasure of *good habits*, I do not believe to be necessary.

Education is the work of time, and it is very far from being an easy, or a mechanical operation. Every moment should be used, every opportunity sought, to preserve good habits, to open the eyes, and to excite the observation, that the mind may be cultivated, and taught to *work its own instruction*. How absurd it is to fancy that a girl can be taught to write only on a high stool, and a sloping table? She need not of necessity be crooked, or awkward, if she has not stocks and backboard, swings of all sorts, high chairs,

straight chairs, narrow chairs, dumb-bells, &c. and how can private gentlemen of small fortune, or rising professional men, afford all the auxiliaries, or the masters which fashion requires for the education of young ladies, particularly if the father's profession demand frequent moves? I have known families always *waiting* for education; to get good masters; to get a more convenient, or a larger house; or, *to be settled*; and I have met others, who use the means *they have*, few as they may be, or seek for them *at once*, and go to work without delay, to keep up what they do know, and be ready to receive more knowledge. Why lose time in making arrangements how, and when to learn? Children do not ramble about into different countries or towns, *alone*, without father, or mother, or some one to take care of them; every body has a few books, there is no

danger of reading them too often ; pens are easily made, paper and ink are cheap, clothes are always wanting some mending or making, and needles and thread are ever at hand ; the bills in travelling ; the accounts of the common expenditure of the family, are lessons in arithmetic ; the elder teach the younger, and you have the work of education going on without preparation or fuss ; and all by the simple aid of *good habits*, and settling *at once* to do, what every one, I suppose, means to be done, but *puts off* like the sluggard : and thus the *time* for improvement *passes*, and the *season* for education is no more. Let me then advise the governess to do that which is within every one's power, and not lose the *present time*, for the hope of what she believes *will*, or *may* arrive : she cannot be expected to teach her pupils what she does not know herself ;

but let her not be persuaded, or persuade herself, that she can blamelessly neglect to instruct them in all she *does* know, and let her put her faith in the certainty that this is an office she can never live to regret ; mere good intentions produce nothing real ; they must be followed up by deeds ; corn does not grow by buying the seed, the plough, and the harrow, nor will a tree produce good fruit unless grafted, neither does a child learn by having a variety of books, but by being urged to read and remember those it has, and being made to think of them often. I do not laugh at the usual auxiliaries, they are very good, I dare say, particularly for saving trouble to teachers : but I contend that they are not *necessary*, and the habit of turning at once, to employment, and of using the hour you have before it flies, is worth ten school-rooms full of every invention yet produced for ex-

pediting, and perfecting the great work of education. I never yet saw a girl's figure if naturally clumsy, or awry, or very awkward, made good by the most expensive collar of the famous *Sheldrake*, but I have often seen awkward, ungraceful, children, greatly improved from imitation, and pointing out to them, occasionally, abruptness, vulgarity, and overbearing manners.*

I have hitherto spoken of nursery governesses, and young children, but what I have said may be useful beyond the age of childhood, and girls of ten, and twelve years old will find the treasure of their early *good habits*, yet, at this age, young people require every day increased instruction, and increased care, and, as the mind opens, they may be taught the *use* of those habits they have

* See note, 1, p. 70.

gained in infancy. The regularity of system must be pursued, and still on the good old maxim of learning *one thing well* before flying to another. Grammar, natural history, geography, history, fine work, drawing, arithmetic, including that branch called "book-keeping," should all be taught by making one lead into the other; for instance if a girl have to learn geography, her lessons in reading, writing, arithmetic, and natural history, may successively cease, *as regular lessons*, but be kept in full and extensive *practice* in learning geography. She makes neat tables of the population of various parts of the world; she calculates revenues; she describes the animals, referring, when difficulties arise, to her *former studies*, which thus never lose their freshness.


By not dwelling in this little book upon



the religious instruction of children, I trust I shall not be thought to deem it unimportant : in this, good habits are of more importance than in any thing else, and, when children are very young, can only be gained effectually from *example*. There are so many opinions as to the time when religious instruction should commence, that, until the world are more inclined to be of one mind, any precept I could offer would be useless : but as the importance of inculcating religious *principles* is admitted by all, I shall so far presume, as to impress on the mind of those about children, the necessity of inculcating *faith*, and *hope* ; and of practising *charity* to our fellow creatures : children should be taught by seeing those they look up to, *practise* the great rule of “ doing as they would be done by.” They should be made to feel the penalty of telling a lie or taking what does

not belong to them, and great pains should be taken to make them understand that *charity* does not consist, solely, in giving away money or food, but also in *forgiving injuries* and *loving others*: and, as soon as possible, children should have the belief instilled into their hearts and minds, by the example of their instructors, of the omnipresence and omniscience of God ; of His goodness and mercy.

It may be that many parents will think I have dwelled too little on these great points in all education ; I believe, and hope, none will think I have said too much. It is fair to myself, at least, to say that the opinions I have expressed are given without presumption, or desiring in these points to dictate to others—as to the FORM of religion, I am *entirely silent*, believing it to be the highest presumption in an individual, and a



female *especially*, to insist on the efficacy of
any particular form. Religious *Principles* I
do believe to be essential to happiness here,
and hereafter, and though there are so many
varieties, * * * * *
* * * * *

Here this little manuscript ends, having
been interrupted by that awful event, which
solves the great problem she referred to ;
and for which, I believe, few were better
prepared than the authoress. I will conclude
with two little stories written by her many
years ago, and sent to the compilers of the
“Evenings at Home,” who were pleased to
insert them in their collection. I give these,
because they form a good conclusion to this
little work.

DIFFERENCE AND AGREEMENT ;

OR,

SUNDAY MORNING.

It was Sunday morning. All the bells were ringing for church, and the streets were filled with people moving in all directions. Here, numbers of well-dressed persons, and a long train of charity children, were thronging in at the wide doors of a large handsome church. There, a smaller number, almost equally gay in dress, were entering a handsome meeting house. Up one alley a Roman Catholic congregation was turning into their retired chapel, every one crossing himself with a finger dipped in holy-water as he went in. The

opposite side of the street was covered with a train of Quakers, distinguished by their plain and neat attire, and sedate aspect, who walked without ceremony into a room as plain as themselves, and took their seats, in silence, the men on one side, and the women on the other. A spacious room was filled with an overflowing crowd of Methodists, most of them meanly habited, but decent and serious in demeanour ; while a small society of Baptists in the neighbourhood quietly occupied their humble place of assembly. Presently the different services began. The churches resounded with the solemn organ, and with the indistinct murmurs of a large body of people following the minister in responsive prayers. From the meeting were heard the slow psalm, and the single voice of the leader of their devotions. The Roman Catholic chapel was enlivened by strains of music, the

tinkling of a small bell, and a perpetual change of service and ceremonial. A profound silence, and unvarying look and posture, announced the self-recollection and mental devotion of the Quakers.

Mr. Ambrose led his son Edwin round all these different assemblies as a spectator. Edwin viewed every thing with great attention, and was often impatient to inquire of his father the meaning of what he saw ; but Mr. Ambrose would not suffer him to disturb any of the congregations even by a whisper. When they had gone through the whole, Edwin found a great number of questions to put to his father, who explained every thing to him in the best manner he could. At length says Edwin,

“ But why cannot all these people agree to go to the same place, and worship God the same way ? ”

“ And why *should* they agree ?” (replied the father.) “ Do not you see that people differ in a hundred other things ? Do they all dress alike, and eat and drink alike, and keep the same hours, and use the same diversions ?”

“ Aye, but these are things in which they have a right to do as they please.”

“ And they have a right, too, to worship God as they please. It is their own business, and concerns none but themselves.”

“ But has not God ordered particular ways of worshipping Him ?”

“ He has directed the mind, and spirit, with which he is to be worshipped, but not the particular form and manner. That is left for every one to choose, according as suits his temper and opinions. All these people like their own way best, and why should they leave it for the choice of another ? Religion

is one of the things in which, *mankind were made to differ.*"

The several congregations now began to be dismissed, and the streets were again overspread with persons of all the different sects, going promiscuously to their respective homes. It chanced that a poor man fell down in the street in a fit of apoplexy, and lay apparently dead. His wife and children stood round him crying and lamenting in the bitterest distress. The beholders immediately flocked round, and, with looks and expressions of the warmest compassion, gave their help. A Churchman raised the man from the ground, by lifting him under the arms, while a Dissenter held his head, and wiped his face with his handkerchief. A Roman Catholic lady took out her smelling-bottle, and assiduously applied it to his nose. A Methodist ran for a doctor. A Quaker supported and com-

ported the woman, and a Baptist took care of the children. Edwin and his father were among the spectators. "Here," said Mr. Ambrose, "is a thing in which, *mankind were made to agree.*"

HALF-A-CROWN'S WORTH.

VALENTINE was in his thirteenth year, and a scholar in one of our great schools. He was a well-disposed boy, but could not help envying a little some of his companions who had a larger allowance of money than himself. He ventured, in a letter, to sound his father on the subject, not directly asking for a particular sum, but mentioning that many of the boys in his class had half-a-crown a week for pocket money.

His father, who did not choose to comply with his wishes for various reasons, nor yet to refuse him in a mortifying manner, wrote

an answer, the chief purpose of which was to make him sensible what sort of a sum half-a-crown a week was, and to how many more important uses it might be put, than to provide a school-boy with things absolutely superfluous to him.

It is calculated (said he) that a grown man to be kept in health, and fit for labour, requires a pound and a half of good bread a day. Suppose the value of this to be two-pence half-penny, and add a penny for a quart of milk, which will greatly improve his diet, half-a-crown will keep him eight or nine days in this manner. A common labourer's wages in our country are seven shillings per week, and if you add somewhat extraordinary for harvest work, this will not make it amount to three half-crowns, on an average, the year round. Suppose his wife and children to earn another half-a-crown. For this ten

shillings per week he will maintain himself, his wife, and half a dozen children, in food, lodging, clothes, and fuel. A half-crown then may be reckoned the full weekly maintenance of two human creatures in every thing necessary.

Where potatoes are much cultivated, two bushels, weighing eighty pounds a piece, may be purchased for half-a-crown. There are one hundred and sixty pounds of solid food, of which allowing for the waste in dressing, you may reckon two pounds and a half sufficient for the sole daily nourishment of one person. At this rate, nine people might be fed a week for half-a-crown; poorly indeed, but so as many thousands are fed, with the addition of a little salt or butter-milk.

If the father of a numerous family were out of work, or the mother lying-in, the

parish officers would think half-a-crown a week a very ample assistance to them. Many of the cottagers round us would receive with great thankfulness a sixpenny loaf per week, and reckon it a very material addition to their children's bread. For half-a-crown, therefore, you might purchase the weekly blessings of five poor families.

Porter is a sort of luxury to a poor man, but not a useless one, since it will stand in the place of some solid food, and enable him to work with better heart. You could treat a hard-working man with a pint a day of this liquor for twelve days, with half-a-crown.

Many a cottage in the country inhabited by a large family is let for forty shillings a-year. Half-a-crown a week would pay the full rent of three such cottages, and allow somewhat over for repairs.

The usual price for schooling at a dame-

school in a village is two-pence a-week. You might therefore get fifteen children instructed in reading, and the girls in sewing, for half-a-crown weekly. But even in a town you might get them taught reading, writing, and accounts, and be so fitted for any common trade, for five shillings a quarter; and therefore half-a-crown a-week would keep six children at such school, and provide them with books besides.

All these are ways in which half-a-crown a-week might be made to do a great deal of good to *others*. I shall now just mention one or two ways of laying it out with advantage to yourself.

I know you are very fond of coloured plates of plants, and other objects of natural history. There are now several works of this sort publishing in monthly numbers, as the Botanical Magazine, the English Botany,


the *Flora Rustica*, and the *Naturalist's Magazine*. Now half-a-crown a-week would reach the purchase of the best of these. The sum laid out in the old book-shops in London would buy you more classics, and pretty editions too, in one year, than you could read in five. Now I do not grudge laying out half-a-crown a-week upon you; but when so many good things for yourself and others may be done with it, I am unwilling you should squander it away like your schoolfellows in tarts and trinkets.

N O T E S.

Note 1.

MRS. NAPIER has not given her opinions relative to girls wearing *stays*, which being a subject of dispute I will here relate what I believe them to have been on this subject, and, therefore, I will speak in the first person.

Some people do not allow girls to wear stays, while others, going to the contrary extreme, case them in armour! In my opinion, both are wrong. The objections put forth by those who disapprove of girls wearing stays, is that nature does not require such assistance—that they are unnatural and injurious to the health of the wearers. In answer to this I say, it may be true that nature does not require stays; but then live in a state of nature, in the open air, a life of constant



exertion and health ! then perhaps (though I do not believe the fact to be so) stays may not be required to preserve the figure and the health ; but if we are to live in warm houses and sleep in soft beds, in short, if we are to lead the life which the present state of society demands ; *then* I assert that stays *are* necessary to give that assistance in preserving the figure which our habits of life prevent nature from affording. I deny however that nature takes any pains to preserve the shape, and as, to stays being called unnatural, we certainly are not *born* in them, but surely they are as natural as any other part of our dress ; that is to say experience teaches us that they are useful. It might be quite natural to go barefoot, and if we went so, we should see young ladies with the most natural broad feet in the world, and full as *ugly* as they were *natural* ! This argument will not hold good, and as (unhappily) our residence is not in Paradise, we must resort to *shoe* and *staymakers*, till that blessed abode be regained. Another objection to going without stays is, that we cannot change human nature and make young girls philosophers, and therefore, with a few exceptions, in despite of mamma, they will tighten their belt, or a string of some kind, round their waist, cutting themselves, as it were, in twain, and such a ligature is *exceedingly mischievous*, as it stops the circulation of the blood, and is injurious in various ways :

whereas stays, that are properly made without bones, (or, which I think better, with one very pliable broad bone, or steel, in front,) secure an *equal pressure*, and do not *cut* round the waist, across all the bloodvessels, as the belt, or string does; *such* stays merely assist nature preserving the figure without injury to health.

Those who want to case girls in long padded stays full of bones seem to me to be more imprudent than those who reject stays altogether; stays of this kind must be tightly laced, or they are of no effect, and if they *are* tightly laced they produce ill health and even sudden death. They give to those who wear them a stiff wooden looking figure destroying that graceful pliability and freedom which gives so much beauty to the female form—a girl packed up in a pair of these stays looks in a state of suffering, and constraint, and much more resembles the figures on which wigs are stuck in a hair-dresser's shop than the Venus of Medicis! Women, who have really fine figures, seldom truss themselves up in such stays, and dumpy fat ones, (who might, perhaps, pass in a crowd if they let nature alone,) when thus cased in whalebone, look more like turtles than any thing else.

Girls should lace their own stays, and the assistance of another person never be permitted *under any pretext whatever*. The position in which lacing their stays

places them for many minutes every day of their lives, expands the chest and improves the form ; dumb-bells are *temporary* expedients and do little good, being left off very soon, but the operation of lacing the stays oneself goes on always, to the great benefit of appearance and health.

When a girl who has never worn stays, marries, her husband may not hold the same opinion that her mamma did ; and the staymaker is sent for ; unaccustomed to wear them, but eager to please her husband, she suffers the greatest uneasiness, and perhaps lays the foundation for years of ill health.

Such appears to be the state of this question, and a very important one it is, because it is intimately connected with *health*, not only as regards an *equal pressure*, but because stays preserve an *equal warmth*, protecting the stomach, and a great portion of the chest, from those sudden chills to which young women are exposed in coming out of hot rooms and after dancing.

Note 2.

The authoress might have here added to her observations on the advantages of plain work ; that when attending sick people, those who can work employ themselves with ease, and, without neglecting their charge, are thus able the better to support their spirits ; for that employment does produce this effect, no one will deny. In confirmation of the opinions held by the authoress of this little work, I find the following statement in the famous William Penn's "*No Cross no Crown*," page 468, 14th Edition, 1806. "The late Princess Elizabeth of the Rhine, of right claimeth a memorial in this discourse, her virtue giving greater lustre to her name than her quality, which yet was of the greatest in the German empire, she chose a single life as freest of care and best suited to the study and meditation she was always inclined to ; and the chiefest diversion she took, next the air, was in some such *plain and housewifery entertainment as knitting, &c.* She had a *small territory which she governed so well, that she showed herself fit for a greater, &c.*" Again, "She kept no sumptuous table in her own court, but spread the tables of the poor ; abstemious herself, and, in apparel, void of all vain ornaments. I must need say, her

mind had a noble prospect, her eye was to a better and more lasting inheritance than can be found below, and made her often to despise the greatness of courts, and the learning of the schools, *of which she was an extraordinary judge.*" So we see that the practices of *plain work*, did not make the Princess Elizabeth neglect her books ! We have also an example of more modern times. The celebrated and admirable Mrs. Elizabeth Carter was as excellent a plain worker as she was learned ; and while that lady *educated her nephews for college*, she *made and mended all their linen !* It would be idle to seek more examples ; because we have only to refer to the lives of any firm minded women, distinguished for having well occupied their time, and it will be found that nearly all have been good needlewomen, thereby turning those *half-hours* to account, which the weak minded, dawdle, and gossip away ; or spend in the mischievous habit of novel reading, a habit that is destructive of the powers of mental application, for the constant excitement produced by novels, leaves but little taste for the patience and labour of thought demanded by better books.

THE END.



LONDON:
MARCHANT, PRINTER, INGRAM-COURT.







Published by

T. AND W. BOONE,

29, NEW BOND-STREET.

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